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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 008511

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [EFIN](#) [EPET](#) [CD](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: ELYSEE TAKING GRIM VIEW ON CHAD

REF: A. PARIS 7792 B. NDJAMENA 1707 C. PARIS IIR 6
832 0101 06

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Josiah B. Rosenblatt. Reassess 1.4b,d

1. (C) Summary: The Elysee "Africa Cell" that advises President Chirac believes President Deby's Chad is undergoing a major crisis, with a near-term coup and territorial disintegration conceivable scenarios. Deby has lost Zarghawa confidence, according to Elysee adviser Labriolle, because he has failed to back Zarghawa rebels in Darfur against Khartoum. Deby has appealed to Chirac for help in assuaging World Bank hostility to a revised plan for oil revenue management that would free up capital for Deby to use in an attempt to rebuild his shaky political base. However, the disagreement between Deby and the World Bank is too deep-rooted to allow an easy solution. End Summary.

2. (C) President Deby's Chad is undergoing a fundamental crisis, according to Jacques Champagne de Labriolle, deputy at the Elysee "Africa Cell" that advises President Chirac. In marked contrast to an earlier more sanguine MFA view (Ref A), Labriolle suggested to Africa Watcher on December 14 that Chad could be on the brink of disintegration if Deby cannot overcome the mounting rebellion among his Zarghawa kinsmen. Some extremist Zarghawa now aspire to an independent state, peeling off territory from both Chad and Sudan, Labriolle maintained.

3. (C) Deby lost Zarghawa confidence, according to Labriolle, because he has dealt responsibly with the Darfur crisis by holding off on supporting the Zarghawa rebels in Darfur against Khartoum. Deby's restraint was due in large part, Labriolle claimed, to an appeal from President Chirac in 2003. That same year, Deby's stature among the Zarghawa declined so precipitously that the rumor mill interpreted his absence from the 2003 Maputo African Union summit as due to poisoning by his clansmen. Because Deby had heeded France on Darfur, despite the harm to his own situation, Chirac felt a personal obligation to stand by the Chadian president, Labriolle continued.

4. (C) Labriolle acknowledged his own Christmas holiday plans were up in the air, given the unsettling developments in Chad. He feared, among other scenarios, a possible coup by one of the Erdimi brothers, potentially encouraged, he suggested, by local elements of an international petroleum conglomerate. His nightmare entailed Libyan forces profiting from the chaos to seize northern Chad.

5. (C) Labriolle confirmed that Deby had appealed to Chirac to intervene with the World Bank over hostility to Deby's revisions of the revenue management law (Ref B). The disagreement, however, is too deep-rooted and Labriolle sees no ready solution. Because Deby is in such hot water politically, he needs access to additional assets now. The World Bank is reacting in dogmatic fashion, Labriolle observed. Moreover, Deby and Wolfowitz are not in communication. Compounding that lack of dialogue, the N'Jamena World Bank representative, whom Labriolle said hailed originally from DRC, is facing criminal charges for alleged sexual harassment, hampering his effectiveness.

6. (C) Labriolle commented that Chadians cannot fathom the principle of a fund for "Future Generations," asking why they should defer spending when they need immediate assistance. Chadians, moreover, aren't seeing returns from recent oil exploitation. In fact, Deby argues that Chad was better off before the petroleum finds, because France, like other donors, provided more generous aid.

MFA Less Tight-Sprung?

7. (C) AF DAS-Equivalent Bruno Foucher acknowledged the growing French preoccupation with Chad to Africa Watcher in a December 16 conversation. He added however that his own worries had subsided somewhat since a December 15 meeting with the Africa Cell and MOD at the Elysee. The temporary deployment of additional French assets from Gabon was a factor, he admitted (Ref C). Above all, Foucher said he saw no single organized group poised to strike in Chad, but rather a plethora of fractious parties who were not coordinating. (Note: Foucher is not changing his own

Christmas holiday plans, which kick off December 17.)

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Stapleton